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***NEWS From:***

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA

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For Immediate Release

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**Rep. Honda Congratulates TSA for Deploying 44,000 Screeners to Increase Security at Nation's Airports**

"Today, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) fulfills its Congressional mandate to hire and deploy federal employees in airport security screening positions at all but five U.S. commercial airports. Since passage of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) on November 19, 2001, the TSA has put in place a force of 44,000 federal employees at more than 420 airports.

"I commend U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta and Acting Under Secretary of Transportation for Security Admiral James Loy for their leadership in this effort. I am confident that a federally trained and managed screening workforce is an important step in the direction of improving the security of our nation's aviation system.

"While I thank those Americans who have answered our call to service and joined the TSA, I continue to oppose ATSA requirements that prohibit the hiring of legal permanent residents, many of whom have valuable training and experience as private security screeners. Just as legal permanent residents serve in our military, so to, should they be allowed to serve as security screeners in our nation's airports provided they meet all the skill qualifications mandated by the ATSA. Last Friday, the Ninth Circuit Court challenged the constitutionality of ATSA's citizenship requirement. I expect that the Court will apply its ruling nationwide, and I renew my call for the Congress to address this injustice before concluding its legislative business for the year."